

Commerce Committee Hearing  
June 16th, 1998  
"Labels & Lyrics"

Testimony by Krist Novoselic

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important dialogue on parental advisory labels. My name is Krist Novoselic. I am President of JAMPAC, the Joint Artists and Music Promotions Political Action Committee. I was also bass guitarist for the acclaimed Rock 'n' Roll band, Nirvana.

Through my interactions with youth and observations on our society, I have developed a great appreciation of the challenges facing young people in our high-tech world of today.

In tandem with our rapid technological development we have cultivated a stimulus culture with our need for stimulation growing exponentially. Is the proliferation of espresso drinks a desperate attempt to keep up with our fast moving world or are those Lattes and Cappuccino's another stimulation fix not unlike a high speed car chase on TV?

So where do youth and lyrics fit in with the strobe-like, quick edit flashes of our hyper-speed information age? We get hit hard and fast by a barrage of so many messages and images everyday. But considering the large variety and quantity of messages we receive, whenever there is a tragedy involving young people the single theme of blaming music is usually consistent. We have to move beyond the grainy, black and white approach of blaming lyrics. We need to move forward and apply full spectrum, high definition solutions to the challenges facing our nation and especially youth.

The highest of definitions is the way we define ourselves as individuals. Life's greatest mission and duty is the cultivation of personal growth. Personal growth's greatest tool is mindfulness. Its greatest enemy is mindlessness. Being mindful is using a resource like, for example, TV Guide and deciding if there is anything worth watching on television then deciding if you even want to turn the thing on. Being mindless is surfing through the roster of channel options, and moving past the same channels three or four times while the hours fritter away. Even worse is handing the remote control, like a baton, to a youngster and making the TV a baby-sitter.

TV Guide, Entertainment Monitor, Rolling Stone along with many music magazines, and surely the Parental Advisory Sticker on sound recordings, are an information resource available to mindful parents to help connect with their children. All of the aforementioned resources are private initiatives that we should encourage and I wish them all to prosper.

In conclusion, simplistic answers to complicated questions will not even begin to address the challenges facing us today. Prohibitions will neither help the mindful nor mindless. It's only through awareness and its advocacy that we can empower ourselves, our families and ultimately, the world.